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## Security Pros Get On Board

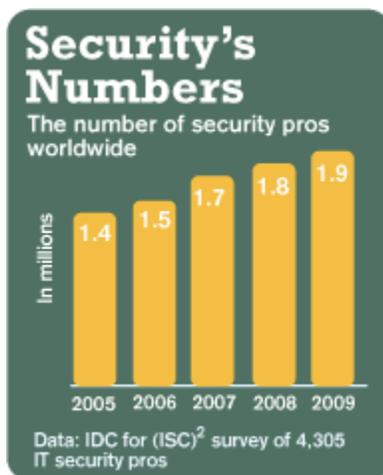
They're gaining the ear of board members as businesses recognize the increased importance of information security

By K.C. Jones, <I>TechWeb</I>, [InformationWeek](#)

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Information security professionals, already experiencing a surge in demand for their badly needed technical skills, may also get a chance this year to flex their business acumen. IT security professionals are being invited into boardrooms around the globe, wielding more influence and finding increased career opportunities.



"Information security is now being perceived as a business enabler rather than a business expense, and, as a result, [security pros] are increasingly being included in strategic discussions with the most senior levels of management," says Rolf Moulton, president and CEO of International Information Systems Security Certification Consortium, or (ISC)<sup>2</sup>, which recently sponsored an IDC survey of 4,305 security professionals in 80 countries.

Seventy percent of respondents to the (ISC)<sup>2</sup> 2005 Global Information Security Workforce Study say they exercised more influence on executives last year than in the 2004. Seventy-three percent expect their influence to continue growing.

Dialogue among business executives and IT pros has evolved from technical security discussions to risk-management strategies. That means information security professionals are invited into boardrooms early in the discussions, rather than being left out until the end, says Sara Bohne, director of communications and constituent services at (ISC)<sup>2</sup>.

The change represents opportunity for vertical and horizontal mobility, says Howard Schmidt, former VP and chief information security officer at eBay Inc. and former presidential cybersecurity adviser. Schmidt, who's on the (ISC)<sup>2</sup> board, says he gets calls three or four times a month from companies that recently created executive positions in security.

"There's more attention and focus on IT security as a profession, as opposed to just a job," Schmidt says.

## Credibility Counts

The (ISC)2 survey also shows that information security is most mature in the Americas, and that accreditation programs are helping build credibility in the field. "Organizations are starting to realize that qualified information security people are just as important as technology," Bohne says. "It's similar to choosing a lawyer or a doctor. You wouldn't entrust a trial to someone who hadn't passed their bar exam. You wouldn't entrust surgery to someone who hasn't gone to medical school."

Companies are looking for people with business and management expertise, as well as security know-how. Those are the kinds of people who can explain security decisions and expenses to shareholders, Bohne says.

Demand for security pros won't slow for five to 10 years, says Allan Carey, IDC's analyst and program manager. For now, however, "many security managers say they still don't have enough resources to accomplish their goals," Carey says. "So, I don't think we've reached that equilibrium yet."

*This story was modified on Jan. 13 to indicate that Howard Schmidt is former VP and chief information security officer at eBay Inc.*



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